About the middle of the fifteenth century, the first descriptive account of the process of carving statues from a model appeared in print, in the well-known book of Leon Battista Alberti, besides whom I am not aware that any other author has written on the subject of getting the points in sculpture.

Having read the paper containing the above observations, Mr. Smith proceeded to explain the process of forming a statue in marble, commencing with the first sketch by the artist in the plastic clay. The making of the full-sized model in clay, and forming from it a mould in plaster of Paris, in which a *fac simile* of the original would afterwards be cast in the last-named material, were then described. The hammer and tools used by the sculptor were also described; and attention was called to the excessive labour, and the length of time required, to fashion a large block of marble into the general shape of model, as well as to the extreme accuracy necessary, as any portion improperly removed could not be, by any means, replaced without occasioning a permanent blemish. The line of cleavage in the grain of the marble must consequently be carefully attended to by the workman, who might perform all the labour of roughing out the block by the mere aid of mechanical contrivances, without necessarily possessing any knowledge of the art.

Though sign and ship carvers might produce some strange representation, in stone or wood, without having previously formed a model in plaster, yet all sculptors of merit, worthy to be called artists, make use of a model. The notion, that Michelangelo and other sculptors of his time did not employ models to carve from, as modern artists do, but that they carved the block at once into the intended statue, was investigated, and great doubt expressed as to its correctness.

Alberti was the first to describe the method, still in use in Italy, for "getting the points"—*i. e.* transferring them from the model in plaster to the copy in marble—by means of the plumb-line and dial system, but he expressly mentioned it as a general and long-established practice. It was formerly used in all countries, and it is even now employed in Italy and France. [The practical application of the method was explained by Mr. Smith.] The elder Bacon was the first sculptor who departed from the old practice, and invented the scale stones, with the ball and socket apparatus, about the year 1764. In this method the graduated scale is fixed beneath the block to be carved, which, together with the model, is fixed firmly on a heavy mass of stone, side by side. An upright staff with cross-arms, on which the probe gauge for fixing the points is set, moves horizontally along the scale stones, and completes the machine. The simpler the instrument the better, as it is subject to rough usage, and is intrusted to the hands of people who are not always careful. Recent improvements in the machine were pointed out: such as making the standard round instead of square; fixing stops against which to push it, instead of a line; and turning the horizontal arm entirely out of the way of the workmen, when required. As transferring the points, or pointing very tall figures, is attended with much inconvenience and loss of time, in consequence of the vibration of the standard, besides occasioning inaccuracy in the head and bust, the most important portions of the figure, Mr. Smith had introduced the new method of using two graduated scales in the height, accurately adjusted to each other, by which means shorter and more stable standards can be used.

The disadvantage likely to arise from the use of models made to a scale considerably less than the carving to be executed from them, having been shown, he observed, in conclusion, that if sculpture be well designed and modelled, little need be done to it in the way of carving, after it has been correctly pointed, in order to ensure its due effect as an architectural feature, when applied at a height above the eye of the spectator.

Mr. Fowler, V.P., alluded to Mr. Smith's observation, that if works of art were intended to be durable, they should not be made of materials, such as bronze, which could be converted to other purposes, and said he had been informed that the Portuguese were in the habit of carving granite with great nicety and beautiful effect. He fully concurred in Mr. Smith's objection to the use of valuable materials for sculpture; and, besides the intrinsic value of bronze, he considered that material highly objectionable, in this climate especially, on account of the obscurity arising from its very dark colour. He believed Mr. Smith had proposed to execute the capital of the Nelson column in stone? (Mr. Smith assented.) He (Mr. Fowler) very much regretted that it had not been so executed, for the beauty of its form was now almost entirely lost by the absorption of light by the bronze. The same objection applied to the bas-reliefs on the base of that column, though in a less degree, as they were nearer to the eye. No doubt the execution of the capital in bronze had involved a great increase in expense, with a decrease of advantage. It appeared to him that the statue of William the Fourth at London Bridge had a very good effect, as regarded the material employed, and that granite was well calculated to resist the soot and dust of London. Moreover, a reflected light was produced from the quartz and mica in the granite, which gave and added brilliancy to objects in that material. He wished to know if there was any practical difficulty in the more general adoption of granite.

Mr. Smith said there was a difficulty in respect to the expense. He should have been glad to execute the capital of the Nelson Column in granite, for the same sum that it had cost in bronze. The leaves of that capital had been cast by three different persons; the first pair of lower leaves weighed 430 lbs. each, but the others were of only half that weight. The beauty of bronze casting was to have the metal as thin as possible, but the thinner it was, the greater was the cost. The leaves were fixed to the granite bell by a bronze collar, to which they were attached by nuts and screws, which might give way at some distant day, when the leaves of the capital would fall. The extreme hardness of quartz, one of the component parts of granite, rendered the cost of working it very great. Still, it had been carved with the greatest success, and anything could be done in granite, if people chose to pay for it. He thought the cost of granite sculpture would be very nearly that of bronze. The mere cost of bronze was not quite so great as was supposed; but the necessity of providing for the risk of failure in the casting, added much to the expense of that material.

Mr. Scoles, secretary, adverted to the hieroglyphics on Egyptian granite figures in the British Museum, which are polished in the inner surface, and inquired if that polish could not be obtained on granite in the present day.

Mr. Smith had no doubt it could. He referred to granites polished by Macdonald and Leslie, specimens of which were in the Museum of Practical Geology.

Mr. Scoles referred particularly to polished intaglio surfaces.

Mr. Smith said it was only a question of time and money, and it could unquestionably be done. He referred to the tomb of the master-mason to either Queen Anne or George I., in the burial-ground of St. John's, Westminster, as one of the earliest works in granite in England. Its mouldings, though such as would now be considered rude in form and execution, were highly esteemed in his (Mr. Smith's) boyhood.

Mr. Fowler observed that he had seen polished granite chimney-pieces in Devonshire, which had been executed forty years ago. Mr. Smith was doubtless aware that Mr. Cheverton had invented a machine for copying statues in ivory on a small scale. After the explanation just given of the extent to which mechanical aid was carried in sculpture, he was induced to ask if it might not be made entirely so, if the power as well as the process were mechanical?

Mr. Smith had no doubt it might on a scale as small as the ivories produced by Mr. Cheverton; but where so large a mass of material had in the first place to be got rid of, as in carving a full-size marble statue, he did not think it practicable.

Mr. Fowler mentioned that a mechanical process, analogous to Mr. Cheverton's, had been applied to carving in wood.

Mr. Smith dwelt upon the fact, that wood was a material much more easily worked than stone. He believed even stone had been carved by Jordan's patent machinery, but he doubted whether it had proved profitable.

Mr. Mayhew (fellow) alluded to Signor Conti's machine for stone carving, which he described, and which he had seen working busts and half-length figures, apparently with great facility and rapidity. The inventor appeared to consider there was a prejudice against the machine in the profession.

Mr. Smith had not seen this particular machine, but he had seen several others, all of which, however ingenious, had failed in a very short time. He thought there was no prejudice in England against such machines, if they did the work well and quickly.

LOWESTOFT AND THE DANES.

Saturday last was an important day for this rising watering-place, and now mail-packet station, for it saw the first steamer depart for Hjerting, in Denmark, as the shortest route to Copenhagen and Stockholm. One main object in opening this new course is the importation of cattle, which by means of the Norfolk and Eastern Counties line will be brought direct to London or the provinces. The Danish king and government are much interested, it is said, in the success of the undertaking, as it will open to them a direct communication with England independent of Germany. The shore arrangements have devolved principally on Mr. Roney, the excellent secretary of the Eastern Counties line. A merry party occupied the vessel (the *Prince* by name, on her first trip, intending to visit Copenhagen and penetrate the country for some distance. Copenhagen, with its Thorwaldsen Museum, Museum of National Antiquities, Opera House, and Royal Library, is not so well known as it deserves to be, and we regard the new route with the greater interest because of the fresh district it will open to the antiquary and architect.

And where is *Lowestoft?* some of our readers will ask. It is about twenty-three miles from Norwich, and nine from Yarmouth; and, through the spirit and taste of Mr. Peto and others, offers strong attractions to the city-worn, who may want quiet, a fine sea, and good bathing. A fine hotel, elegant esplanade, extensive pier, and numerous well-placed modern houses have sprung up in a singularly short time. We were wandering on its beach last Sunday, and were well pleased with Lowestoft and all we found there.

Tradition ascribes the first invasion of England by the Danes to the murder of Lodbrog, a Danish prince on this coast: the invasion of Denmark by England to-day from this point, may be regarded as an interesting return of good for evil, at a long distance of time.

The National Gallery.—A proposal, it may be recollected, to transfer the national paintings from the Trafalgar-square Gallery to Kensington Palace, was discussed in The Builder some time since. It is now reported that this suggestion is to be carried out by the Government, who are said to have at last become convinced of the necessity of removing them from their present position. If such really be the case, the change will doubtless be carried out forthwith, as Kensington Palace, from the first of next month onwards at least throughout the present year, will be one of the most central positions possible for a popular exhibition to strangers of our national pictures, notwithstanding its suburban locality. The Vernon collection, we presume, would also be removed from Marlborough-house and re-united with the older section at Kensington Palace, otherwise it would scarcely be worth while carrying out such a project.

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